Introduction

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The purpose of the present volume is to investigate the multifarious aspects of the relation between an artwork (visual, literary, or musical), its objective properties, the meaningful experience of it, and the cognitive skills and acts involved in the latter. Each of these aspects is a genuine and irreducible part of what I here will call the "aesthetic complex," and each of them thus constitutes an autonomous domain of research or an object of scholarly interest: that certain visual or cognitive capacities are activated in the interaction with aesthetic objects; that the experience of aesthetic objects has a particular phenomenology, either because it is accompanied by an appreciative judgment (or a rewarding feeling) or because it is about a specific kind of object (artful objects); that artful objects have properties that plain objects—natural as well as cultural—do not have; and, finally, that aesthetic objects manifest or represent a meaning in that they give shape to or embody an artistic meaning intention. The psychology, the phenomenology, the ontology, and the semiotics of the artwork each aims to lay down the above characteristics in each their domain, with each their methods.

The contributors to this volume are philosophers, psychologists, literary critics, and semioticians. As such, they address only one or just a couple of the above-mentioned aspects. Each chapter will show, however, that the inquiry into one of the essential aspects of the aesthetic complex naturally raises research questions related to one of the other essential aspects. It is thus difficult to consider meaning-making in art without considering those structures and properties in artworks that embody that meaning or produce that meaning effect. Similarly, it is difficult to lay bare the essential properties of artworks (or of artful representation) without analyzing them in light of those properties of the human cognitive system or of the

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P.F. Bundgaard, F. Stjernfelt (eds.), *Investigations Into the Phenomenology and the Ontology of the Work of Art*, Contributions To Phenomenology 81,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-14090-2_1

visual brain that make man particularly responsive to such qualities. In short, even though scholars, for obvious reasons, distribute their efforts selectively and focus their attention on one of the aspects of the aesthetic complex, these domains of inquiry are complementary.

With this volume we therefore hope not only to give the reader access to recent research within the ontology, the phenomenology, and the semiotics of the artwork, but also to manifest the complementarity of work done in each of these domains.

In the remainder of this Introduction, I shall first go into some more details with regards to the different aspects of what I have called the "aesthetic complex" and next give a short introduction to each of the chapters of the volume.

As the subtitle of this volume suggests—*What are Artworks, and How Do We Experience them?*—one can distinguish two correlates in the aesthetic complex: a subjective correlate, encompassing whatever relevant properties of the experiencing subject or whatever relevant goings-on in the cognitive system; and an objective correlate, concerning whatever relevant properties of the object likely to elicit a characteristic subjective response.

The emergence of Aesthetics as a philosophical discipline is coextensive with the discovery of the sensitive subject as the pivotal element of aesthetic experience. The object of inquiry becomes—already from Alexander Baumgarten's *Aesthetics* (1750) and definitely with Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790)—the subjective correlate of the aesthetic complex, i.e., the cognitive dynamics activated in the viewer when perceiving artworks or when experiencing things considered beautiful, valuable, or of aesthetic interest. When Kant characterizes beauty in his *Third Critique*, he defines it not as a property of an object but as a feeling that is the outcome of a certain "harmony of the faculties," a specific balance between certain cognitive centers (Imagination and Reason). Or, to use present day terms, a characteristic way of processing information that differs both in function and content from the way non-aesthetic information is processed.

In the same vein, Kant pinpoints another essential aspect of aesthetic experience that is exclusively subjective (not in the "relativistic" sense, but instead pertaining to the experiencing subject): the mental set in which the object is attended to, which is "disinterested" in that it does not pursue any theoretical (epistemic) or practical (moral) interest, nor does it pursue the fulfillment of any desire of any sort.

Whether Kant is right or not in claiming the disinterested nature of aesthetic experience is not important here. What matters are the two basic tenets of what could be called the Kantian legacy in aesthetics writ large: (1) aesthetic experience should be defined not in terms of the object that elicits the feeling of beauty but instead in terms of particular activation of the cognitive system; (2) subjects can attend to aesthetic objects—or objects deemed beautiful—within an intentional framework (or a mind set) that is different from the framework through which we relate to objects for epistemic or moral purposes; (3) since aesthetic experience should not be understood and explained with reference to certain properties of an object and therefore does not require a specific competence for capturing those properties (both perceptually and intellectually), it is not the privilege of a particularly apt or trained section of the population—the aesthetic subject is a general subject.

The philosophical and scientific enquiry into aesthetic experience which has developed in the wake of the *Third Critique* has, of course, not been Kantian through and through: the apriorism proper to Kant's system, the complex mechanics that keep the harmony of the faculties together have not been part of most, if any, of the research programs in this domain. Many such programs can nevertheless be considered post-Kantian because: (1) the experiencing or sensitive subject is brought to the fore; (2) the feeling of beauty—or, independently of the feeling of beauty, the experience of artworks—is considered as being a specific cognitive response resting on general properties of the human "mind," the visuo-cognitive system or human "sensitivity" in general, and therefore amenable to description or scientific description.

Marshaling such general positions, of course, does not warrant any unity, nor does it define a research program. With regards to point (2), there is considerable difference between approaching the response to beauty within Fechner's empirical aesthetics (Fechner 1876) or present day neuroaesthetics (Zeki 1999; Chatterjee 2010; Ishizu and Zeki 2011; Nadal and Skov 2013) and addressing aesthetic experience in terms of those perceptual structures that are meaningful (not necessarily beautiful) for the visual brain (Arnheim 1954, 1969; Petitot 2009; Bundgaard 2009, 2014). Yet, however different such research programs may be, they address a series of issues that are all related to the subjective correlate of aesthetic experience broadly taken (both as an experience accompanied by a rewarding feeling and as an experience of a specific kind of objects, namely artworks). Some of these questions are: if we attend to aesthetic objects differently than to plain everyday objects, then what characterizes this intentional attitude or mindset? If there is a difference between the phenomenology of seeing three apples, a photo of three apples, and a painting of three apples, then what characterizes the phenomenology of aesthetic experience? If artworks affect us perceptually by virtue of their qualitative (visual, textual, or acoustic) layout or design, what are the phenomenal or qualitative properties that are particularly significant for us and how do we process visual information (e.g., how do we reconstruct represented objects from depicting surfaces)? What attracts our attention or facilitates our memory when perceiving or reading artworks? If artworks affect us by virtue of given properties of our visuo-cognitive system, then what are the relevant properties exploited to that effect? If there is a specific phenomenology of aesthetic experience, does it follow that there is a general brain state or a neural dynamics that correspond to that phenomenology? If the feeling of beauty indeed often accompanies aesthetic experience, then how is it to be described? Is it a unitary response, triggered off by the same kind of stimuli for natural or biological reasons? Is it conventionally or socially imposed or is it idiosyncratic?

As already mentioned, the subjective correlate of aesthetic experience is nevertheless only one part of the full story. It is—and has indeed been—difficult to maintain an exclusive focus on the subjective aspect of aesthetic experience. If the feeling of beauty is considered a response to a given object or state of affairs, it seems natural to ask if certain types of states of affairs or designs cause such responses. This is the hypothesis that drove Fechner's seminal research in

experimental aesthetics and a central endeavor in both Zeki and Ramachandran's (Zeki 1999, Ramachandran and Hirstein 1999) work in neuroaesthetics. It consists in laying bare the objective sources of the rewarding feeling of beauty (artists' alleged capacity of revealing the essence of things represented is claimed to be one such source [cf. Bundgaard 2014 for a critique]). Moreover, from an ontological point of view, artworks differ from plain everyday objects in different respects. Painted landscapes resemble real landscapes, but they don't look like them, as it were: they pertain to an entirely different category of things. So even though the feeling of beauty or of aesthetic interest—in short, the hedonic aspect of aesthetic experience—may be elicited by both natural phenomena (land-, city-, or soundscapes; faces and bodies) and artifacts, the latter display *sui generis* properties which make them essentially distinct from natural or biological phenomena (be it only because they have been produced by an intentional agent). Here again, it seems natural to ask whether the categorical properties of the object[1] inform the phenomenology of perception or inflects the visuo-cognitive system's processing of information and sense data. In short, a new cascade of research questions follow from taking one's point of departure in the objective correlate of aesthetic experience: what properties do artworks possess that plain objects don't? Where does art come from (evolutionarily speaking)? If artworks depict or represent something, then what exactly is depiction or pictorial representation? If artworks are intentional objects par excellence, how is this intentionality encoded in them and how can it be retrieved if it is to be retrieved in the first place? If artworks are valuable in a sense that plain objects are not, what do we mean by "value?" Do artworks, in virtue of their formal structure, embody a meaning that affects the way in which viewers (or readers) attend to them or process the information conveyed by them?

The latter question opens yet another domain of inquiry, one situated somewhat between the purely subjective and objective components of aesthetic experience or between the phenomenology and the ontology of the artwork: the domain of (pictorial) meaning, the semiotics of the work of art. Paintings are not only intentionally arranged so as to elicit an appreciative judgment for such and such reason. Artists give shape to meaning intentions that, of course, cannot be reduced to the simple objects depicted in their paintings. The semiotics of the work of art can be addressed in different ways and in different theoretical (psychological, philosophical) frameworks. The frameworks and the basic theoretical commitments notwithstanding, the key question is arguably how paintings, in virtue of their formal structure (their design), "embody" a meaning. Throughout his work, Rudolf Arnheim has incessantly repeated that painters are not illustrators—that is to say they do not just depict a scene, however artfully. Crucially, they also interpret to

[1]This also holds true for literary art or, rather, fictional discourse: does the fact that a text is accessed as a piece of fiction affect the phenomenology of reading or the reader's interaction with the text (cashed out in, e.g., what a reader remembers of a text, how much, and in what way)? Experimental studies tend to support an affirmative answer to this question (cf. Hendersen and Clark 2007; Zwaan 1994).

the viewer's eye the meaning that the motif is intended to communicate to his mind and do so with purely pictorial or painterly means. This implies that the meaning addressed here is not the one captured in a global interpretation of the work (such as "The glorious Napoleon from Jena," or "The vanquished Napoleon on Saint Helena"), but those more or less local meaning effects that serve the purpose of embodying aspects of that global meaning. Here is how Arnheim formulated it: "In a work of art, an abstract pattern organizes the visual matter in such a way that the intended expression is directly conveyed to the eyes" (1954, p. 152). A similar claim is made by John Hyman in the present volume: "Artists exploit *the communicative possibilities inherent in the medium as such* [. . .] with specific *materials, tools and techniques* to communicate *thoughts, feelings and perceptions* in a work of art" (Hyman, present volume: pp. 205).

The semiotics of the work of art—here understood as the pictorial meaning expressed in the painting through the tools and techniques employed by the artist to this effect—also gives rise to intricate research questions and conflicting research programs: is pictorial meaning in the final analysis conventional, the outcome of a grammar shaping pictorial expression from the outside, as it were? Or do artists exploit both hardwired properties of the visual brain and ontological properties of the medium (surface properties, brushwork, shapes, spatial relations . . .) with a view to producing such and such meaning effects? Regardless of the answer one is inclined to give to such questions, it seems reasonable to assign a status to the domain of pictorial meaning that is irreducible to both to the phenomenology and the ontology of aesthetic experience. Paintings can for example convey meaning without eliciting a feeling of beauty; or two different paintings can tap into the same automatisms of the visuo-cognitive system (say, processing by means of grouping) and produce different meaning effects.

As already mentioned, the present book is intended to address all these three issues. The book has been structured so that the first chapters mainly concern issues in empirical and phenomenological aesthetics, followed by chapters mainly addressing the ontological properties of artworks (that make them distinct from other objects or which characterize them in general), concluding with chapters which approach artworks as semiotic objects, either as regards the meaning-making devices proper to artworks or as regards the semiotic mechanisms in virtue of which objects are assigned a status as artworks. However, as the reader will quickly realize, almost all chapters develop topics that recruit insights from the neighboring domains of inquiry.

The first two articles are developed within the framework of "empirical aesthetics." This research program is relatively recent (Miall and Kuiken 1999; Bortolussi and Dixon 2003; van Peer 1986; Sanford and Emmott 2012), but it has roots back both to Roman Ingarden's phenomenological studies into the ontology and the cognition of the literary work of art—in particular his characterization of the phenomenology of the reading process (how readers, in order to obtain a full representation of the fictional universe, must "concretize" information given by the author, and how they must "fill-in" all those spots the author has left undetermined [Ingarden 1931])—as well as to the notion of "defamiliarization"

or "foregrounding" developed by the Russian formalists in the beginning of the twentieth Century (Shklovsky 1917). Pivotal to approaches such as those of David Miall, Marisa Bortolussi, and Peter Dixon is the intention to lay bare the cognitive mechanisms and empirical properties of the reading process at large: what do readers actually respond to and how do certain textual properties affect the reading process, information processing, recall capabilities, and emotional responses?

In "Temporal Aspects of Literary Reading," Miall readdresses the readers' experiences of "defamiliarization" with an aim to laying bare the different mental processes which are activated when feeling strangeness and which may be considered as subjective correlates underpinning the presence of "literariness." Miall's model of literary reading covers two domains: first, on the basis of neuroscientific studies of EEG waves, he addresses the initial moments (the first few hundred milliseconds) of the experience of literary reading: these include absence of habituation, the deferral of intention, the thwarting of prototypical feeling, bodily alertness, and the experience of animacy; each of these are considered as aspects of "defamiliarization." In the second domain, he considers some sequential features that guide and shape response on a larger scale, focusing in particular on the processes of feeling and their impact on the reader.

In *Psychonarratology* from 2003, Marisa Bortolussi and Peter Dixon experimentally tested the actual effect well-known narratological tools for meaning-making have on readers' information processing and representations of the textual world (these comprised phenomena such as "perspective," "narrator," "free indirect speech," and so on). In the chapter "Memory and Mental States in the Appreciation of Literature," they address yet another crucial aspect of the reading process: namely readers' memory skills. Ideal readers are considered to have unconstrained access to the text. Bortolussi and Dixon show instead that the processing of literary narrative is contingent upon the fragmentary memory of real readers. In their chapter, they highlight a decisive determinant of memory: the variation in readers' mental states during reading in terms of mind wandering, in which the reader momentarily gives relatively little priority to processing the text, and engagement, in which the reader constructs elaborate and personally meaningful representations of the story world. They show how variations in both these parameters affect reading processes and determine memory for both text and aesthetic reactions. Their analysis and claims are further supported by the results of two experiments in which readers' mental states were probed online during reading.

Cathrine Kietz's chapter, "Temporal Conflict in the Reading Experience," aims at capturing a neglected aspect of text processing, which is likely to be exploited by authors for both aesthetic and semiotic purposes. Kietz' claims that readers are imposed a perspective analogous to visual perspective, which she calls a temporal perspective that spans beyond the present singular point in time. The idea is that characters in a story of course have a visual perspective on the represented world, whereas the reader has a temporal perspective that transcends the local perspectives and embraces the narrative as such. To that extent, the reader's temporal perspective is somewhat displaced with respect to the represented visual perspective: there is a temporal distance between the represented events and the reader's point of view.

With examples from Flaubert and Kafka, Kietz shows how this temporal distance can be exploited aesthetically and semiotically to create a conflict between the world represented in the literary work of art and the way it is presented.

The empirical investigation of aesthetic experience in the domain of visual art was launched by Fechner. Fechner's main concern was to establish the laws of aesthetic preference—this goal is still eagerly pursued within neuropsychology of aesthetics. Yet, another primordial branch of the empirical study of aesthetic experience attempts to characterize perceptual interaction with visual artworks by means of eye-tracking. This method—as it was used by, for example, the Russian psychologist Yarbus (1967)—has provided with important insights into what visual phenomena attract the attention of viewers (i.e. which are intrinsically significant for viewers) and in what ways the perception of artworks differs from the perception of plain depictions. In the chapter "The Aesthetic Experience with Visual Art 'At First Glance,'" Paul J. Locher, who has himself made important contributions to this field, presents a key aspect of visual behavior in the aesthetic domain as well as a review of the literature on this subject. Studies have shown that aesthetic experience with visual art occurs in two stages (Locher et al. 2007). A viewer first spontaneously generates a global impression, or gist, of the work. This gist includes a sense of the general content of the painting, its overall design and style, meaning, as well as an affective response to it. When gist information in a painting durably attracts the attention of an observer, a second stage of aesthetic processing ensues. This consists of directed focal exploration of the image and follows the goal of increasing knowledge about the work's compositional features and organization. This chapter presents an overview of research findings that have identified the types of visual properties and semantically related information that collectively lead to the activation of what is labeled a "painting gist" (Locher's own term). It concludes with a discussion of the influence of the painting gist response on the focal exploration of paintings.

John M. Kennedy and Marta Wnuczko also discuss a pivotal aspect of visual representation in their chapter, "What Is a Surface? In the Real World? And Pictures?" The crux of their argument is that pictures are depicting surfaces that show or represent surfaces. In this sense, the perception of pictures is twofold in a sense akin to Wollheim's (1987). To understand this double property of pictorial perception—that we see a surface and in that surface see represented surfaces—a theory of surface perception is required, which is outlined in the chapter. Linear perspective, characterized by foreshortening, is what allows perceivers to experience real surfaces and representational pictures use perspective to depict surfaces with great fidelity. The authors, in their plea for realism, show that surface information is picked up by the viewer in the natural world. A further claim is now that perception of representational pictures is based on such rich and easily retrieved information from and for surfaces. The authors conclude their chapter with a caveat: their defense of perceptual realism has natural limits: perception of surfaces (or the extraction of surface information) can be erroneous, particularly in the case of highly foreshortened surfaces. The dynamic relation between the two aspects of the twofold perception triggered of by representational artworks may be a source of illusions.

Patrick Colm Hogan's chapter "The Idiosyncrasy of Beauty: Aesthetic Universals and the Diversity of Taste" comes to grips with what has always been considered a cornerstone of aesthetic experience: the feeling of beauty. If by "beauty" we understand an aesthetic response, we must acknowledge the existence of a great variety of individual aesthetic response while still having to account for what they have in common. Hogan argues that one may assert the existence of universal principles of beauty without being forced to claim that everybody has the same experience of beauty. Hogan shows that it is indeed the other way around: when understood and defined correctly, universals of beauty predict and explain individual diversity. The two main principles underlying the feeling of beauty are claimed to be two main information-processing factors: (1) non-habitual pattern recognition and (2) prototype approximation. When such processing takes place—i.e. non-trivial pattern recognition and acknowledgement of a resemblance with an internalized template of beauty—the experience is felt as rewarding. While universal, these principles also explain the great variety of responses there may exist, since people clearly may have different skills for pattern recognition and may have developed different prototypes for beauty and different prototypes *tout court* (contingent upon their previous experiences). As Hogan shows, a viewer possessing the prototype for, say, pointillist painting may have a finer, more well-attuned or sensitive response to a late Seurat painting than a viewer who would simply assess it as a token of the prototype "painting." The article thus accommodates scientific findings about the experiential phenomena that activate the reward system (non-trivial pattern recognition in challenging environments), thus proposing a principled account for the experience of beauty that is universal in its scope while still being able of not only subsuming the diversity of individual responses, but also predicting it.

Another important component of aesthetic experience is that it has to be sufficiently "immersed"—the definition of which is probably still to be refined. The point being that immersion is not simply to be understood as a partial loss of world awareness—something which may obtain in plain thinking, meditation or when reading a particularly interesting scientific text—but as a partial imaginary enaction of an alternative reality. This holds particularly true for the reading of fictional works (or film-watching) which has to be accompanied by what Coleridge called the "willing suspension of disbelief," i.e., some sort of decoupling of those cognitive processes in charge of asserting the veracity or plausibility of what we are experiencing. The capacity to engage in pretense is a necessary condition for playing games, reading, watching movies, and perhaps even seeing paintings. This capacity designates a human skill to partially enter alternative realities—and, of course, to exit them at will. This skill—the imaginary action in and interaction with alternative realities—is the topic of Shaun Gallagher's "Why We Are Not All Novelists." Drawing from findings in psychology, psychopathology, phenomenology, and neuroscience, Gallagher proposes a graded continuum of pretense-cognition, with at one pole, say, children's game playing and at the other pole different sorts of pathologies involving delusional subjects getting more or less stuck in their alternative reality (e.g., subjects suffering from the Capgras syndrome)—and in-between different degrees of passive immersion. For example,

from a reader's immersion in the fictional universe up to more active, but still non-pathological immersions, epitomized, according to Gallagher, by novelists' enhanced ability for creating/entering into multiple realities and sustaining them longer and more consistently than lay people. This enhanced capacity for fiction—for durably creating and sustaining alternative realities—is, according to Gallagher, "quasi-solipsistic" and "remains short of dysfunction or delusion," which is exactly the reason why we are not all novelists.

Jean-Marie Schaeffer develops a double argument in his chapter "Aesthetic Relationship, Cognition, and the Pleasures of Art." Within a phylogenetic "costly signal" approach to aesthetic activity and experience—based on the structural, *not* functional homology between art-making and costly signals in the animal world: in this case among bowerbirds—he identifies one essential property of aesthetic perception: its attention is inflected away from standard cognitive attention to a non-economical use of mental resources characterized, among other things, by the fact that its finality is not exhausted in and by the recognition of the represented objects. As regards this quality of aesthetic perception—its style of attention is shifted—Schaeffer also develops a neo-formalist hypothesis about a property of artworks that likely causes such an effect: it is the fact that their semiotic function is altered or defunctionalized; the finality of visual representations of water lilies, children, interiors, landscapes, or abstract figures is not, contrary to what is the case in plain images, simply to make us recognize such objects, but rather or also to indulge in the qualitative presence of such objects, that is to say the very perception of them. The second aspect Schaeffer claims is essential to aesthetic experience is its hedonic character. In a Kantian vein, Schaeffer grounds this property from the visual or attentional system's awareness, as it were, of its own processing dynamics. Pleasure or aesthetic interest results from an auto-appraisal of the visuo-cognitive activity, not simply from an evaluation of the properties of the object. This point is cognate with Patrick Colm Hogan's claim to the effect that aesthetic pleasure is grounded on non-trivial pattern recognition that implies some sort of agreeable perceptual effort and thus some evaluation of visual processing itself (for example as a worthwhile effort). This idea is further elaborated in the author's notion of a bi-directional feedback between attention and hedonic calculus, which finally leads him to assess the relationship between cognitive fluency (as developed by Rolf Reber [Bullot and Reber 2013]) and positive aesthetic experiences, arguing that fluency can explain the aesthetic pleasures of art only in conjunction with a second and opposite source of pleasure: curiosity.

As suggested by the title of his chapter, "More Seeing-in: Surface Seeing, Design Seeing, and Meaning Seeing in Pictures," Peer F. Bundgaard considers the phenomenology of aesthetic experience as twofold, in a sense akin to Wollheim's (1987): we see an object in a painting, and, simultaneously, we see the constructed surface in which or in virtue of which the object appears. However, as regards the perception of artworks proper, the notion of twofoldness needs further specification. In the wake of Wollheim, the philosophy of pictorial representation has addressed the second, 'configurational' aspect of twofoldness in rather vague terms as awareness of the "surface" in which a depicted object is recognized or as a sort

of co-perception of pictorial "design," without really addressing the aesthetic or pictorial function of this correlate of aesthetic perception. Following Lopes (2005), the author calls such co-awareness "design-seeing" and assigns two properties to pictorial design. First, he identifies a depicting property of design that is a distinctive property of pictures; that is to say, not something all pictures necessarily instantiate, but something pictures can that other objects can't: design in pictures is such that it can depict two (or, in rare cases, even more) fully consistent objects without the picture becoming ambiguous. This property is called the multiply depicting design of pictures and it is shown to exploit basic grouping automatisms of perceptual processing. The experience of artworks is not simply doubled with an awareness of the material support in which something can be seen (e.g., a wall or a canvas), but rather with an awareness of the depicting surface in virtue of which something is represented; in certain cases the design of the depicting surface can give rise to two well-structured visual experiences. The second refinement of Wollheim's notion of twofoldness is semiotic in nature: the design structure of a painting is not simply a structure in virtue of which something is represented to the eye, but also a structure in virtue of which meaning is conveyed to the eye, thus seeing-in doubled with design seeing occurs every time lines and shapes do not only depict, but also mean something (in virtue of their morphology and qualitative properties and in virtue of the relations between them).

In the chapter "Depiction," John Hyman defends a version of the so-called 'resemblance' theory of depiction: pictures are different from texts in that they resemble the objects they represent. The classical version of this theory has become increasingly unpopular. For two reasons, both of which, according to the author, are wrong. Critics have mistakenly taken that resemblance is only a relation: a relation, moreover, between two existing particulars. Thus, if "resemblance" demands the existence of two particulars, which look like each other, then, trivially, "depiction" cannot be suitably captured by a resemblance theory since a picture, as an individual thing, does not look like the thing it represents (Napoleon, a tree or a horse). Moreover, the definition of "resemblance" is flawed. Hyman shows that expressions such as 'resembles,' 'is like,' 'looks like' can indeed function as two-place predicates and thus express relations between particulars (e.g. 'SoHo is like Hampstead'); but, importantly, they can also function as copular verbs—that is, as part of a one-place predicate (e.g. 'SoHo is like a village'). Obviously in the latter case, the resemblance is not claimed to hold between two particulars. Hyman, in contrast, develops a neo-Fregean framework for a full characterization of depiction, claiming that all figurative pictures have some generic content (say, *a* horse), but only some portray (e.g., Bucephalus or Dan Patch), just as all descriptions have a sense but only some refer. ('The greatest integer' has a sense but does not refer.) Hyman shows how these mistakes are related in that reference is a relation whereas sense is not, and the general point is—grossly said—that what pictures represent is not their reference, but the sense of the reference, its mode of presentation (as Frege had it in: "Sense and Reference"). In other words, pictures are predications of the objects represented in them. To that extent, Hyman concludes, a resemblance theory should not be interpreted as a theory of pictorial reference—in which case it falls short—but as a theory of pictorial sense.

The final three chapters address the artwork from a more accentuated semiotic perspective. In "Green War Banners in Central Copenhagen: A Recent Political Struggle Over Interpretation—And Some Implications for Art Interpretation as Such," Frederik Stjernfelt considers a specific aspect of artful objects, namely the way in which they, to different degrees, express propositional contents and therefore lend themselves to interpretation (as well as over- and misinterpretation). In order to pinpoint some of the possible pitfalls of interpretation, the author introduces the Peircean doctrine of Dicisigns—proto-propositions—that embraces a range of sign vehicle types able to instantiate propositional content, such as signs involving pictures, diagrams gestures, etc. Taking a particular Danish controversy—that of a military "cartouche" at a Copenhagen barracks—as an analytical example, the paper argues that the ubiquity of Peircean Dicisigns makes it possible to envisage different strategies and degrees of weakening the propositional strength of Dicisigns as we typically find them in the art domain: fictionalization, dispensing with parts of propositional structure of the Dicisign, as well as weakening the functional structure of the Dicisign.

Groupe μ are also concerned about the sign processes involved in the perceptual interaction with the work of art. In "The Appropriation of the Work of Art as a Semiotic Act," they do not, however, focus their attention on the logic subtending the representation of "sense" or quasi-propositional contents in artworks (as both Hyman and Stjernfelt did, each in their own way). Rather, they address the semiotic acts in virtue of which given objects in space are assigned a specific sign status, namely as artworks. Such acts require the existence of a certain instance assigning that status for someone—hence the emphasis put on the interactive character of the process. In their chapter, the authors unfold a series of key properties of the sign type involved in the appropriation of objects as works of art, i.e. the 'index,' which plays a pivotal role in this social dynamics, both with regards to the declarative instance selecting and qualifying an object that thereby count as artful and to the object that is selected as well as the subject for whom the object is thereby selected and qualified.

This volume concludes with Wolfgang Wildgen's case study "Sculpture, Diagram, and Language in the Artwork of Joseph Beuys." Wildgen unravels the meaning effects produced by Beuys in an analysis of both the ontological properties of the artist's works (materials, of course—from steel and stone to fat and animal matter—but also their temporal specificity) and the semiotic devices he exploits, particularly in his programmatic diagrams (words, graphics) but also in the integration of language in his artistic work. A special point of interest in this chapter is indeed Beuys' transition towards language as a symbolic system and the philosophy of art he exposes in his drawings and diagrams as well as the general relation between art and science in his artwork.

Through these contributions, our hope is thus that the present book will cover essential aspects of what I have here called the "aesthetic complex," i.e., the ontology, the semiotics, and the phenomenology of the work of art. Obviously, investigations in each of these domains can, to some extent, be conducted independently of findings produced in the neighboring disciplines. Artful pictures have properties that can be characterized irrespective of the way in which they

are experienced. Similarly, important elements of the phenomenology of aesthetic experience—for example, the intentional framework for picture seeing compared to the one for plain object seeing—can arguably be unraveled and laid down without resorting to experimental psychology. And, e.g., perspective as a tool for meaning-making can be examined on purely semiotic grounds. However, since the aesthetic complex is indeed irreducible—visual or literary artworks are intentional objects shaped to produce certain experiences—it would most likely be counterproductive to investigate, for example, the phenomenology of aesthetic experience without ever taking into consideration fundamental ontological properties of the object perceived as well as the forms and techniques in virtue of which it not only depicts or represents something, but also produce determinate meaning effects. By the same token, the phenomenological inquiry into the arcana of aesthetic experience at large—i.e. both with regards to the feeling of beauty or the interest triggered by aesthetic objects and with regards to the experience of artistic objects as such, regardless of the feeling they produce—may be taken in an empirical direction in order to track down the actual effects written or visual artworks (and tools for meaning-making) produce in human beings (with respect to, say, attention, gaze behavior, memory, and interpretation). As appears from the short presentation above, this volume also contains contributions from authors working in the domain of empirical aesthetics—or employing methods therefrom. Such experimental approaches to both visual and literary art should of course not supplant traditional methods in philosophical, phenomenological, and semiotic aesthetics, but rather complement them. Indeed, if a painter does employ specific techniques to produce meaning effects, force specific visual experiences upon the beholder, and communicate certain contents (emotions, ideas), another essential aspect of the "aesthetic complex" is the way in which human beings, in virtue of their psycho-physic constitution, actually interact experientially with such intentionally shaped objects and thereby pick up or respond to the artist's meaning intentions. Thus, another relevant task for aesthetic inquiry is to investigate how the visuo-cognitive system, text-processing systems, the attention system, and the memory system contribute to the actual experience and understanding of aesthetic objects.

One volume is obviously not enough to even outline the aesthetic complex thus understood. We are convinced, however, that the contributions to the present book will make it clear why aesthetics, as the scholarly investigations of artful objects, must constantly keep track of what artworks are, how they mean, and how they are experienced.

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